

Montgomery County Universal Preschool Implementation Work Group
February 19, 2009
6:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Council Office Building, 6th Floor Conference Room
100 Maryland Avenue
Rockville, MD 20850

MINUTES

Members present:

Janine Bacquie
Kate Garvey
Traci McLemore
Julie Bader
Mary Lang
Jane Seffel
John Surr
Jackie Lichter
Khadra Ayorinde
Gene Counihan
Clara Floyd

Members not present

Jose Alvarez
Jennifer Devine
Brad Stewart
Rolf Grafwallner

Start Time: 6:08 p.m.

Ben Stutz informed the group that the report must be ready by March 27th so Councilmember can review the report in their weekend packets. A copy of the draft recommendations should be available to the public by March 6th so the public will know what they should respond to. Between March 11th and March 27th, there would need to be a way to complete the report perhaps by meeting on the March 19th that is has extended hours (5:00 p.m.-9:00 p.m.).

The group voted to extend the meeting on March 5th to begin at 5:00 p.m.

The group agreed to meet on the 17th to begin at 5:00 p.m. The meeting on the 26th will begin at 6:00.

March 30th - tentative press conference for the report from place and time TBA.

Minutes will be approved at the next meeting. The work group members will look over the minutes to see if there are any issues that need to be raised.

The work group began to discuss the UPI Work Group Issues for Decision- 2/19/2009

- **Bolded items indicate final recommendations made by the Work Group.**

Decision Point: Communication and Outreach Plan

The group recommended including:

- Website
- Business community
- Religious institutions; faith based organizations- Community Ministries
- Recommend the Early Childhood Congress be one of the agencies that helps move the message forward of Preschool for All
- Business community should be engaged to gain their support on early childhood education issues. Such organizations are: Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce and the Roundtable and Committee for Montgomery.

Technical assistance to help providers understand what is available

Decision Point: Auxiliary Services

- First Paragraph: Discussion
 - The cost effectiveness relates to the needs of the students and their families. As preschool extends from the neediest children to children who are less needy, you need fewer services. Only some services, like the mental health consultant and the health consultant can be extended across all programs, but the attention should be focused to where the needs are greatest.
 - Programs would have to demonstrate that they have a direct link to provide services.
 - These services will be made available to parents either through partnership or direct service through the preschool programs.
 - The program would build into their grant that they are able to link into organizations or agencies where the services can be provided.
 - The cost per student to provide these services may not be included in the grant; cost per program.
 - The state grants should increase as the number of services for students increase.
 - **Parent involvement is not a service and should be removed from the service. The program should have an established plan to demonstrate how they will keep parents engaged and involved.**
 - **Maintaining or engaging parent involvement should be a requirement on the program. (parental involvement requirement)**
 - **The Group supports increased State funding to expand services to keep pace with demand.**
 - **The program should be required to provide the correct assessment to refer the children to the proper agency or service provider.**
 - InfoMontgomery and ChildLink are both resources that should be utilized and encouraged.

- **Professional development will have to include training to determine the needs for the child. There is training available to providers to do developmental screening. Quality enhancements included in the grant for Preschool for All could include developmental screenings.**
- Is the current level of service enough to meet the demand? If not, what needs to happen to improve the level of services?
 - Developmental screening- staff development; done on every four year old in every setting (general screening)
 - Family support services/social services are other services where the capacity will not be able to available for all four year olds because there is such a shortage of teachers and resources to provide service for each child.
 - Developmental screenings needs to be defined as a general screening and but not screening so in depth as what MCPS performs in their special needs programs.
- **Services are not required to be provided on site but programs should be able to identify where to send families even if they have to link to a service.**
- At what level will the county have to begin to fund services?
- **Use the network of services that already exist; assess this level of funding to see what additional funding will be needed.**

Decision Point: Expansion Rate and Statement of Inclusion

- Program Expansion- no clue as to how much funding will be coming from MSDE; waiting on the Business Plan that is to be complete by 2009.
 - **The County is willing to match the funds according the proposed Business Plan when funding becomes available**
 - **Encourage Council to work with the delegation; willing to accept more grants as they come available**
- How to expand? **A measured approach is supported by the group.**
- **The group supported working with the whole community of qualified providers to develop ways to deliver high quality services to meet the demand for services and to mitigate unintended negative consequences.**

Decision Point: Faith Based Programs

Recommendation is supported by the group

- **may participate in Preschool for All**
- **Must comply with all Preschool for All requirements**

Decision Point: Teacher Compensation

Recommendation: Salary will first be paid by the state up to the state average across all jurisdictions. Montgomery County should subsidize the salary for Preschool of All teachers according to the average salary of Montgomery County teachers for the first

five years. The first five years average is calculated by the comparable education level and experience (the county will compensate the county teacher's salary up to that average).

Will preschool teachers be subject to the collective bargaining agreements that are done by the state? The council should examine the issues of collective bargaining. **The group will revisit this issue.**

Decision Point: Expansion Targets

The group shared the data that was collected regarding FARMS. The group requested the documents be sent electronically.

Recommendation: Target poverty rates (FARMS) as the single leading indicator of where the needs are and where Preschool for All should be first implemented. The Work Group supports the use of the State's guidelines on first serving children who fall within 300% of poverty as established by FARMS. The next tier for priority for expansion will be programs that demonstrate their ability to serve English Language Learners and special needs.

The population of low income children is at least 4000 but the current level of services being provided are to only approximately 2400 students.

Decision Point: Student Eligibility

Recommendation: Preference first goes to children in the catchment areas (as determined by the school address/ school attendance area) who are income eligible according to 300% of FARMS. After first reasonably exhausting all efforts to serve children in the school attendance area, the provider may move beyond the specified community so long as the applicants remain income eligible.

Decision Point: Transportation

Transportation is not required under Preschool statute for C.O.M.A.R. However, developing a transportation plan should be a long term goal. Transportation should be built around the public school system. The group suggested a payment system established for those participants whose income exceeds 300% of FARMS. Service for transportation will follow the same rollout as the Preschool for All program income eligibility where children whose income falls below 300% will not be required to pay for the transportation service.

Recommendation: The Group wants to make a policy statement that there should be a transportation system for Preschool For All that will be serviced by the local school system because public preschool should not discriminate regarding transportation for public school and private preschool.

The Work Group requests more detailed examination of how is transportation being used in other states for Preschool for All.

SmartStart Scholarship Bill: opposed by the group.

Adjournment- 8:35 p.m.